THE Invaluable Price OF AN *Immortal Soul.*

Shewing the Vanity of most people, in taking care for the Body, but neglect their Duty, as to the preservation of their never-dying SOULS.

By Mr. *Richard Baxter.*

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The Invaluable Price OF AN IMMORTAL SOUL,

Shewing the Vanity of moſt People, in taking care for the Body, but neglect their Duty as to the preſervation of their never-dying Souls.

With advice to ſecure Sinners, to examine themſelves before it be too late, that when Death ſhall come to ſeparate their Souls from their Bodies, they may be in a condition to Welcome Death for that happy Change which all prepared Chriſtians will for ever rejoyce in.

Very neceſſary for all People to Read and conſider, who would Willingly be accounted true Chriſtians.

With large Admonition to Prayer, as a duty moſt incumbant upon all who deſire to obtain everlaſting life, through Chriſt Jeſus.

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THE Invaluable Price OF AN Immortal Soul,

SHEWING,
The Vanity of most People in takeing care for the Body, but neglect their Duty as to the preservation of their never-Dying *SOULS*.

THE Immortality of the Soul is a thing indisputable, and the natural proneness of Man to sin, is a thing undeniable: But the Body which should be as a servant to the Soul, is now (the more is the pitty) taken more care for in one day, then the soul in one year. How diligent are Men for the preservation of their bodily health, by providing for themselves what Delicates the appetite desires: while their poor souls are even starved

for want of Heavenly Food, and ready to faint for want of Divine Cordials: if the body be distempered, the Physition is run for, but the poor Soul which sometimes lyes in a perishing condition shall not find one Dram of Spiritual Comfort to Refresh it self: Oh Christians, consider how it will be with you at the last Day if you suffer your poor souls to be thus Ship-wrackt, consider the price of your souls, which cost no less then the precious blood of Jesus Christ to redeem them, the riches of the whole world is not worth one soul that now is so little regarded; it had better been for those who are so careless of their Souls never to have had any, but to have been like a brute Beast, that when it Dyes there is an end of him; but it is not so with Man, for he shall give an Account at the great day of all his worldly transactions, the neglecting of his Soul, the too great care of his body, the starving of the one and the pompering of the other; which though they know it must Dye and shall Dye, yet will they take more care for it then that which cannot nor shall not dye, but live for ever in endless joys, or unspeakable torments.

Besides

Besides this great neglect of most Men, there are more very great and dangerous defects in and amongst seeming professors, who are so secure in their sins, that they will confidently affirm, That if any go to Heaven, they shall be of that number; for say they, We have Lived Honestly, we have done no Man wrong, we have not Lived Debauched Lives, we are not given to any notorious Vice, but never consider that they have brought sin enough into the world to Damn them, without the great mercy of God, who only can preserve and keep us from that Lake of Everlasting Torment provided for those who shall not Dye in the Lord.

How few is there that are convinced of Original sin imputed to them? and how many that never consider that they with Adam Transgressed by eating the Forbidden Fruit; Nay, I fear do not so much as busie their Thoughts with any such matter, but are satisfied with their morallity, and account themselves upright in their dealing, and so conclude they are in a fair way for Heaven: but alas! poor Deceived souls, this is not sufficient for you, for you will never ar-

rive at that desired haven of happiness without a better wind do fill your sails, he will fall short of his desires who putteth his trust in his own Works or deserts, for all the Impieties of Mens wicked lives are nothing in comparison of that venome which lodges in the heart by nature, and Man himself hardly sensible thereof: Oh wretched state that Man knows not his own heart, but hath a Thousand times more sin in him unknown, then the greatest self-conceited person in the world can see perfection in himself: few there are that are not too strongly and too well opinionated of themselves, and some have high esteem of others, and will say, that such a one is a good natur'd Man, he hath no deceit in him, he would not wrong a Worm: when alas, these Excellencies are nothing in comparison of that Ocean of Sin, deformed Corruption, which lurks in his heart, and cannot be rooted out but by that Heavenly Antidote which alone can expell the Poyson of sin out of our corrupted Hearts, carnal Men do not consider that their wilful minds are not nor cannot be subject to the Law of God, which is absolutely

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pure without spot or blemish, whilst the best of our actions, the supream of our thoughts, are vain, sinful and Rebellious.

The Carnal mind thinks of nothing more then to provide for this present Life, and hath no reflection upon Eternity, nor makes any provision against that severe Winter which undoubtedly will follow the pleasant Summer of our pleasure and delight, but minds only the present things of this Life, with the neglect of seeking after eternal happiness: would not you account him silly who would exchange Diamonds for Pebbles, Gold for Dross, or Liberty for a Goal? how much more is he then to be accounted witless, that minds momentary pleasures before Everlasting Happiness, taketh more care for his mortal Body then his immortal Soul, and prizes the Riches of this World, which have Wings and will flye away, before those never-ceasing joys which attend all those who do most faithfully and diligently seek after and earnestly desire to obtain them. Carnal minds are slaves to the more ignoble parts of our souls, and love that best which is least

least worth: we have such a sinpathizing Nature toward sin and momentary pleasure, that we do not only endeavour to extenuate the culpableness of the Crimes, but rather justifie and Plead for them, being so agreeable to our sinful Natures. And thus do we Walk dayly more and more in sin, till at last we are brought into such a Labyrinth of sin that we cannot find the way out, nor can our blinded Consciences tell us our errours of our lives, for we conclude all is well with us, we do justifie our selves with good opinions of our selves, and thus we erroniously deceive our never-dying souls.

Again, Some have a kind of an unwilling willingness to sin, and could wish that such and such things were no sins, because they are so suitable to their sinful desires, they had rather to live a brave, jovial, merry life, like servants to sin, then a sober, serious, and holy life like servants of God: thus still are present injoyments preferred before everlasting Crowns of Glory to come, and conclude with the Old Proverb, A Bird in hand, is worth two in a Bush: these enjoyments they are certain of, but future

enjoyment

injoyment, they may miss, poor incredulous sinners, dare you not take Gods word for what he hath promised, think you that he will make any abatement of the Reward which he hath promised to bestow upon those who keep his Commandements, and walk in the paths of Righteousness? No, it cannot be, he will rather add then diminish from your joys, he takes as much delight in multiplying mercies, as you in multiplying sins, and what he hath promised shall be made good.

Some also are blinded in their affections, so as to love what they should have hated, and hate what they should love, and yet are not sensible of what a sad condition they are in, but go merrily on, and fear not but in the end they shall be saved, concluding that there are many Thousands far worse then they that live in open sins and abominations, which they abhor; and some of these, if not most or all of them, will say that they hope to be saved as well as others, and if they can hope for salvation, well may they who live much more Civilized and strangers to these enormous Crimes and detestable practises:

yet

yet still do they deceive themselves, and look not upon sin so as to see it in its greatest deformity, which makes Devils of many who are still fighting and striving against God and his most just Laws, and do not consider that the devil is the Authour of it, but still flatter up themselves, and say, That they have nothing to do with the Devil, nor he with them, yet are never better pleased then when they are busied about the devils work: They conclude, that they can live in sin and defie the Devil and all his works.

How few is there that can give a true definition of sin, and what an Enemy it is to all Mankind; for had it not been for that blessed Mediator Christ Jesus, the whole frame of Nature had been utterly destroyed by it.

Sin is absolutely contrary to the will of God, therefore should it be absolutely detestable to the Heart of Man, sin would pull down what Gods holy Laws would set up, and Establish Gods prescribed Laws for the salvation of souls, and the Devil devileth sins for the Destruction of souls, yet will not poor sinners see that impurity which in sin it is clearly

clearly contrary to the very Nature of God. It is universally evil, there is no good in it, nor can come any good of it, Men are not easily perswaded there is any good in Poverty, Reproach, disgrace, Persecution, but very easily believe there is good in sin.

This jumps with their opinion, this suits with their sinful Natures, and all things fall out according to their worldly desires: but never to take into consideration the Evil effects and Miserable Consequences of sin, the Writting on the wall is not minded while they are alive.

Were it possible for Men to go to Hell-Gate, there to hear the Terrible shrieks and crys of the Damned: Or could we perswade People to believe the words of the Prophet, There is no peace to the Wicked; then surely Men would not set their Delights upon sin, which is the sole Object of Gods hatred, and nothing separates betwixt God and souls but sin; though sin fills the Conscience with Terrour, Hell with Fire, yet few are affrighted hereat, but continue in their old Road of wickedness, till Judgment follows close and before they

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are aware overtakes and destroys them in the midst of their sins.

There are also some who are clearly cast out of the favour of God, yet are not at all sensible of their miserable conditions, but go dancing along in the devils Chains, and mind not that the sentence is given forth, because it is not forthwith executed, though there may be but a little breath before they for ever perish.

How many is there that never knew what a wounded Conscience or the fear of Iudgement means, yet count themselves Noble Spirits, and promise to themselves Peace, reckon themselves needy of nothing; when alas, poor deceived souls, they need but all.

Though Ministers dayly labour to convince them of their errors, yet they rest confident that their Condition is good as the Precisians, nor can serious consideration take such hold on them as to cause them to lose one Minutes rest to lament their sad Conditions, never were they so sensible of the insupportable Burthen of sin, as to cry out What shall I do to be saved? And the reason is, because they are dead in Sins

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and Trespasses. Death is a Thing which deprives us of sense as well as of Life; the Dead fear not though threatned with the greatest of punishments; The Dead fear not though God pronounce woes upon woes against them: The Dead see not, though Hell be so frightful a place: The Dead smell not, though Sin stinks worse then rotten Sepulchres: The Dead feel not, tho' Mountains of lead were lying on them: They complain not as Cain did in the Bitterness of soul, by reason of Sin: Nor say with Hannah, that they were ever of a sorrowful spirit.

And though there be an Entayl of wrath upon the very sins they live in; though Hell be open to receive the impenitent and hard-hearted sinner; and though room is preparing for them to entertain them with the Vengeance of a Displeased God, yet few Work out their salvation with Fear and Trembling, but fall short of the sense of Hypocrite. Oh! I pitty these secure souls, how short will they fall of their hopes, and not only so, but how far will they fall short of Heaven.

And

And again, Some are not sensible that it is Sathan who finds out these stratagems to destroy their poor souls, or that he hath the Possession of the Hearts of the Unregenerate: but certain it is, that he hath Walks in the Hearts of meer Natural Men, therefore plain it is, that while thou art Unregenerate, he is as certainly entred into thee, as ever he was into the Herd of Swine, and will hurry thee into destruction, as them into the Sea.

Though some may be convinced of the Deformity of sin, yet they are not convinced of the necessity of Personal and constant Obedience, which is Required by the Covenant of works, but conclude, that if there be any failure in the whole Law, so much as to a vain thought, that then this Covenant is broke, and nothing but dread and fear shall seize upon such a soul.

But to prevent these sorrowful consequences of Neglect or misconstructions. Take my advice, and apply your self wholly to God by Prayer for his assistance: Prayer is a thing which shuts up Hell & opens Heavens Gates; yet how little hath Prayer been used

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as it ought to be, it is too often seen that Men under affliction appeal to God by prayer, but afflictions being once past, he forgets again, and prayer is neglected. It is very sad, when our affections are so little Heaven-ward, as that we aim not at all at Gods Glory, but altogether our own advantage? how can we expect that God can have any respect to our prayers, when we have none to his Divine Majesty, and perhaps if we be not presently answered, we flye out into extreams, and speak contemptuously of our Creator, who can in one minute throw us all into Everlasting Misery: such is our weakness, such is our wickedness, that upon every occasion we are apt to charge God wrongfully, nay, speak almost blasphemously: though the cause why our prayers are not answered is in our selves: To live without prayer is to be dead while alive, for it is to live without God: what can you do less for God then by this hommage to own him for your Creator? or what can you do less for your own souls, then beg for their salvation of him who alone can grant it?

Prayers may well be counted and and called sallies of the soul for more Grace, and neglect of them can be no less than provocation, it grieves God to see that he should be so merciful and gracious as to let his Door stand open, and that he should assure us of a welcome at any time, and that we should be so unkind as not to visit him with our prayers, which should be looked upon as Embashes to his Divine Majesty, he cannot but take this very unkindly.

Consider the Reward which is promised to prayer, you have Christs word for it, for he saith, When thou Prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall Reward thee openly.

But notwithstanding this so sweet promise, how is this Duty by some omitted, and by others quite deserted. Satan is an utter Enemy to prayer, and studies out many ways to put by prayer, he persuades some that if they do pray, it will be but hypocritically:

others that it is not a convenient time, for some worldly business is to be dispatched, or any fallacie to put by this Holy Duty, for the Devil doth seek and contrive all the ways that possibly can be used by him to intrap and insnare Mans soul, on purpose to make it as miserable as himself: But Man was Created for a more Nobler design then to be led Captive by the devil, and prayer is the main instrument to avoid all his allurements.

Private Prayer is in a manner a secret talking with God, and who would not be glad to have such blessed Communion with him, who only can make us eternally happy, or everlastingly miserable: it is somewhat Saint like to delight in private Conference betwixt God and the soul.

But let not the Devil so blind your Eyes, neither as to think that the uttering a parcel of good and rhetorical expressions after any manner of way or formality will be taken for prayer with God: Oh, that will not do, for you must pray ardently, affectionately,

sincerely, zealously, earnestly, and also constantly: and if you would have your prayers answered, you must wait with patience, for Gods time is the best and fittest time to answer prayer in, for he knows best when and how to answer us, and what is fittest for us to enjoy: but many there are, who because that their prayers and petitions are not answered presently according to their expectations, do presently revolt from their custome of prayer, thinking that because God doth not suddenly answer them, he doth not take any care of them: when alas poor souls, if they did but remain constant and fervent in their devotions, God hath promised to be heard by them, and that he will aid and succour them according to their necessities.

We ought to submit our wills to his will, whether our prayers be answered or no, and not to desist from praying because we enjoy not the thing which we do earnestly pray for.

For to desist from good Works or Holy Duties, is some small kin to Apostacy, and Back-sliding will suddenly bring

bring you out of acquaintance with God, and then will this Duty (so Necessary for all Christians) be Totally extirpated, and you become a Nebuchadnezzar, unto a Heathen will you soon turn.

If thou dost love God, thou wilt love to be with him in private, where thou mayest freely impart thine affections unto him. Let not thy Religious worship in thy Family be used on purpose to keep up thy Credit with Men, for God who is the Searcher of all Hearts, will not be so hypocritically served, the upright and the sincere heart the Lord loveth.

Make it thy Business to wait upon God in private, for when thou art by thy self then thou art the fittest to call upon God, as being at that present freed from worldly incumbrances. The Heathen Scipio doth much Commend these private solitudes, for saith he, Then can I freely entertain my own imaginations, and Converse with all the learned that have been in former ages. But thy Honour is greater to converse with God,

God, who loves to Commune with the soul in private, and communicates his affections to his people in secret: David praised God seven times a Day, but his Day sacrifices yielded him not that marrow and sweetness which he tasted in the Night, being then sequestred from all Business which might impede or hinder his godly and pious intentions.

When we are alone, Satan is most busie, and then have we the most need of Heavens Auxiliaries. No sooner doth the True Christian open his eyes from sleep, but he opens his heart likewise to God, and posts to Heaven with secret ejaculations and praises to Gods Holy Name, and doubts not but that God will be as willing to receive as he to offer up his Morning sacrifice.

Besides, many Mischiefs attend by deferring Holy Duties, which God expressly in his Word hath commanded we should diligently keep: God is not willing to be served last of all, but expects the first-fruits, and reason good, because he bestows upon us his choicest

Blessings.

Blessings. Then let me perſuade all thoſe that believe their ſouls everlaſting good, not to neglect this Holy Duty, which will be ſo beneficial to your ſouls, and ſo pleaſing unto our Almighty God, which that you may ſincerely do, ſhall be the prayers of him that ſubſcribeth himſelf a hearty well-wither to all your ſouls.

FINIS.

IOHN:CLARKE